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Chad: Prospects for Escalation of the Conflict

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An Intelligence Assessment

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February 1986

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Chad:
Prospects for Escalation
of the Conflict [redacted]

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An Intelligence Assessment

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This paper was prepared by [redacted] Office
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**Chad:
Prospects for Escalation
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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 10 February 1986
was used in this report.*

We believe one of Libyan leader Qadhafi's principal foreign policy objectives in Sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the removal of Chadian President Habre and the installation of a pro-Libyan regime in N'Djamena. In pursuit of this goal, he has significantly improved his military capabilities in northern Chad, and [] Qadhafi hopes to resume military action against Habre in the near future. The level, pace, and timing of Libyan military activities, however, will be determined by Qadhafi's assessment of possible French and US reactions and other foreign policy priorities.

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Qadhafi's preoccupation in recent months with other regional security issues, domestic problems, and the crisis with the United States has delayed—but, in our view, not deterred—his military plans in Chad. We believe Libya will become more aggressive in Chad only when Qadhafi becomes personally engaged in the decisionmaking process because of the risks he attaches to possible French or US retaliation as well as the potential domestic repercussions of even a limited defeat. If Paris responds to Libyan aggression with military force, we believe Qadhafi might retaliate by targeting French personnel and facilities for terrorist attacks.

Although France has few direct economic interests in Chad, Paris views a stable pro-Western Chad as a buffer against Libyan expansionism into areas of greater strategic and economic importance, according to a variety of published statements. We believe that French policy in Chad is guided by two underlying objectives—to deny Qadhafi control of N'Djamena and to avoid a protracted conflict that would entail high human and economic costs. Consequently, barring a major Libyan invasion, we believe that Paris will be reluctant to use military force. Direct Libyan support for a rebel push across the 16th parallel—particularly the visibility of that support—is likely to be the key factor in determining a French response. With the approach of French legislative elections in March, we believe domestic political considerations will increase the Mitterrand government's reluctance to use military force in Chad.

Habre has substantially improved his political standing and the capabilities of his Army over the last year, but his rule remains vulnerable to Libyan destabilization efforts. We believe chronic morale, equipment, and logistic problems would severely hamper Habre's ability to repel sustained Libyan-backed rebel actions in the north. In the south, Habre still faces a chronic Libyan-backed insurgency that drains his scarce financial and military

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resources, despite successful government counterinsurgency operations in 1985 that have significantly improved the security situation. Meanwhile, Habre also remains vulnerable to a Libyan-backed terrorist attack.

In looking ahead we see three general scenarios that reflect the range of possible conflicts in Chad over the next year. We see about a 1-in-3 chance of increased small-scale clashes between rebel and government troops, but no large-scale operations south of the 16th parallel—essentially a playing out of the current situation. This scenario assumes that Qadhafi remains preoccupied with other issues and does not choose to raise the stakes in Chad, thus avoiding an escalation that risks a French response. Although Qadhafi might carry out provocative actions—such as sending rebel patrols south of the 16th parallel or stationing jet fighters in northern Chad—we believe French policy would remain unchanged.

The odds are slightly better than even, in our view, that Chadian rebels with limited Libyan support will launch a series of more sustained attacks against Habre's northern positions. Under this scenario, Qadhafi's willingness to test both French resolve and Habre's military capabilities would reflect his confidence that Paris—if it responds at all—would be extremely cautious. Rebel and Libyan units are already positioned to carry out such attacks and could strike with no warning. Although we believe government forces probably can repel an initial rebel attack, they are ill equipped to fight in a protracted low-grade conflict, particularly if armor and heavy artillery are employed.

The Chadian Government, French military commanders in the field, and some moderate African states, in our view, would strongly urge a French military response. We believe the Mitterrand government would equivocate initially, but probably would become involved if there were undeniable proof of a direct Libyan role. If Habre's position became clearly precarious and he was forced to retreat from his major northern garrisons, we believe a French military response would become even more likely. Paris probably would first respond with airstrikes and a token deployment of ground forces, but if this did not halt Libyan and rebel advances we believe additional ground forces would be introduced. If the French do not intervene, however, we believe that Habre eventually would be defeated as Libya would continue to increase its direct military support to the rebels with additional armor, heavy artillery, and airstrikes.

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In our view, there is a 1-in-10 chance of a large-scale Libyan and rebel military operation designed quickly to seize large tracts of territory in an advance on the capital. Before initiating this scenario, we believe Qadhafi would be confident that the French response would be delayed, and possibly limited, thereby allowing Libyan forces at least to gain additional territory. Libyan forces in Chad would require additional preparation to carry out such an invasion, including more heavy-lift transporters, troop reinforcements, and fighter aircraft deployments. Although we would expect to observe these additional deployments, our warning time for such an offensive would be significantly reduced if Tripoli used deception methods similar to those employed in hiding Libyan forces from the French in late 1984. The most likely evolution of this scenario, in our view, is that Qadhafi—encouraged by the lack of French retaliation following Libyan-supported rebel attack across the 16th parallel—would decide to send in Libyan troops under the guise of a “peacekeeping force.” Although Mitterrand would be reluctant to reintroduce ground forces on the scale of the 1983-84 Operation Manta, we believe he would probably do so if there were no other way to halt a Libyan and rebel drive for N’Djamena.

Although Paris remains N’Djamena’s principal backer, diplomatic reporting suggests that Habre and other African leaders are looking increasingly to Washington to bear a greater share of the burden in Chad. This tendency is likely to intensify over time as economic constraints force the French to play a diminished role in Africa. If France appeared hesitant to support Habre against Libyan aggression, we believe moderate African states would expect Washington to provide emergency military aid, to exert political pressure on Paris to intervene, and if necessary to respond with military force to stop Qadhafi from reaching N’Djamena. Qadhafi also will be watching for indications of US willingness to intervene; an aggressive reaction from Washington probably would prompt him to slow down his military timetable in Chad, while a cautious response would encourage him by convincing him that the United States was unwilling to counter Libyan expansionism directly. If Habre falls, we believe neighboring African states would be quick to blame Washington and Paris for their failure to protect a moderate regime in Chad that resisted Libyan subversion. Unsure of the West’s willingness to intervene on their behalf, moderate states in the region probably would be increasingly reluctant to adopt positions in international forums that might provoke Qadhafi to subvert their regimes.

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**Chad:
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Introduction

Judging from his recent military buildup in northern Chad, Libyan leader Qadhafi continues to place a premium on removing Chadian President Habre and installing a pro-Libyan regime in N'Djamena. In the 15 months since France unilaterally withdrew its troops, Tripoli has gradually consolidated its hold on the northern one-third of Chad and, in our judgment, is positioned to resume military actions against Habre. We believe Qadhafi's preoccupation in recent months with other regional security issues, domestic problems, and the crisis with the United States, has delayed—but not deterred—his military plans in Chad. This paper examines the prospects over the next year for renewed conflict in Chad, focusing in particular on those factors likely to lead Qadhafi to initiate a military move and those that are likely to govern a French response. We then outline three possible escalation scenarios and conclude with a look at the implications for the United States.

improved Qadhafi's military options in Chad as well as in the region as a whole. Air defenses at Ouadi Doum and Faya-Largeau airfields were recently upgraded with SA-6 surface-to-air missiles, which are capable of threatening French reconnaissance and fighter aircraft.

- Libyan ground forces have been augmented with additional armored and mechanized units, bringing assigned troop strength in Chad to about 6,000 men—its highest level since early 1984. We observe that many of these units, however, are under strength, and we estimate that the actual number of troops is approximately 4,500.
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Military Buildup in the North

The increased pace of Libyan resupply activity over the past eight months suggest that Qadhafi hopes to resume military actions in northern Chad in the near future. According to US Embassy reporting, N'Djamena and Paris are both aware of Libya's buildup and have made preparations to respond to a possible Libyan or rebel attack.

- Urgent resupply, repair, and maintenance activity has been taking place. Ouadi Doum has been heavily used since September 1985 by large Libyan transport aircraft to rotate fresh troops and equipment into northern Chad.
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Libya also has improved the combat readiness of Chadian rebel forces in the north and smoothed over its difficulties with the rebels, who had shown increasing resentment of the heavyhanded Libyan occupation and who had begun fighting among themselves. We estimate, that rebel forces in Chad number about 3,000 lightly armed troops, with perhaps an additional 1,500 at training camps in Benin

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Libyan and Chadian Rebel Activity

Tripoli's construction and resupply activities over the past year have significantly improved its military capabilities in Chad.

- The new airbase at Ouadi Doum is operational and now capable of handling both heavy transports and jet fighters, and conducting night operations. It is the only surfaced runway south of Aozou and has

¹ The As-Sahra brigades are made up of non-Libyan Muslims with Libyan officers and are sometimes termed "the Islamic legion." Some As-Sahra forces were used by Tripoli in Chad in 1981 and 1983. These brigades are probably under strength—perhaps only battalion size—and in a poor state of operational readiness. There is no confirmation that these troops have in fact deployed to Chad.

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Status of the Rebel Government

The Libyan-backed rebel government, the Transitional Government of National Unity (GUNT), is, in our judgment, little more than a creature of Qadhafi who prescribes the political stance of its ostensible leader, Goukouni Weddeye. Even during the best of times, the GUNT was an uneasy amalgamation of widely diverse and traditionally hostile ethnic and religious groups, but lately growing anti-Libyan sentiment and chronic centrifugal forces have brought the GUNT to the point of disintegration, according to the US Embassy, with some splinter factions even reconciling with Habre. In addition, Chadian officials have noted a continuous flow of defectors from Libyan-occupied Chad, all reporting the rebels' poor morale, factionalism, deprivation, and Libyan abuse. Only Libyan support and hostility to Habre hold the remaining factions of the GUNT together, in our view.

Although Goukouni Weddeye has retained his position as president of the rebel government, we believe he serves at the pleasure of Qadhafi and could be removed at any time. Libyan support allowed Goukouni to survive an apparent attempt by several factional leaders to overthrow him in September, but as a result he is more dependent than ever on Tripoli.

_____ he was recently forced to make a number of concessions to Tripoli, including agreeing to allow his armed forces to be brought under the direct control of the Libyan commander in Chad. Goukouni's credibility among African leaders, even with those who once supported him against Habre, has eroded markedly in the past two years. Habre is now recognized as the legitimate head of state by most African states and virtually every important regional and international organization, according to the US Embassy.

Despite the poor state of the GUNT, however, we believe it continues to play a critical role in providing Tripoli cover for its presence and policies in Chad. Consequently, Libya in recent months has made a concerted effort to unite the various factions, improve its relations with the rebel government, and resupply rebel forces with food and other essential supplies. Although Tripoli's recent actions probably have improved GUNT capabilities, factionalism and poor morale continue to plague rebel forces, and we believe close Libyan support would be needed for them to launch a successful military campaign against Habre.

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and Libya. _____ since last October the Libyans have provided rebel forces with armored personnel carriers, vehicles mounted with heavy machineguns, large quantities of fuel and munitions, and communication equipment—a marked departure from their reluctance earlier in the year to give the rebels anything more than the bare minimum of supplies and equipment. Moreover, according to _____

_____ Chadian officials claim that rebel forces have moved to more forward positions over the past few months and are now conducting frequent joint patrols with Libyan forces near the 16th parallel. _____

N'Djamena and Paris Respond

President Habre has reinforced and resupplied his northern garrisons in response to the military buildup of Libyan and Chadian rebel forces, according to the _____

We estimate, _____ that since last September Habre has sent to the north approximately 1,500 soldiers, possibly including some units of his elite Presidential Guard; this would bring the total there to about 5,500 lightly armed troops. Habre also has moved some heavy equipment to the north as well as more ammunition, fuel, vehicles and small arms. According to the US Embassy, Habre believes that a rebel offensive against his northern positions could occur at any time, and he has increased patrols north of the 16th parallel in an effort to avoid a surprise attack. _____

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French Military Capabilities in Africa

The French maintain approximately 6,500 soldiers in Africa from which they could draw quickly to return troops to Chad. In France, two divisions of the French Rapid Action Force have been prepared for rapid movement overseas. The French air force normally maintains three groups of fighter aircraft in Africa, each consisting of four Jaguars with aerial refueling support. Normally, these groups are located in the Central African Republic, Senegal, and Gabon, but Paris recently moved the group from Senegal to the Central African Republic. In addition, the French have sent four Mirage F-1 interceptors from France to the Central African Republic to provide air cover for aircraft operating there.

A lack of long-range transports severely limits French capabilities to respond quickly in Chad. While Paris could send troops on short order, delivery of heavier equipment would take some time. The air force has five DC-8 passenger planes for use in moving troops and equipment, and has previously supplemented these by leasing Boeing 747s from commercial companies. In past moves to Chad, however, the 747s carrying larger items of equipment were unable to land at N'Djamena, so military equipment—such as light armored reconnaissance vehicles—was delivered to the Central African Republic and either moved overland to Chad or ferried by smaller C-160 transports. During the French intervention in Chad in 1983-84, most of the equipment was delivered by sea and shipped overland through Cameroon.

the French Government also has become increasingly concerned in recent months about the continuing Libyan buildup.

in late November, Paris sent eight additional Jaguar attack aircraft as well as Mirage F-1 interceptors, tankers, and reconnaissance planes to its airbase in Bangui, Central African Republic. In addition, French aircraft have been flying reconnaissance missions over northern Chad, jet fuel has been pre-positioned at N'Djamena, and the 1,300 French troops in the Central African Republic have increased their alert status, according to . Meanwhile, according to the US Embassy, Paris sent \$6.6 million of additional military supplies to N'Djamena in mid-December and plans to provide additional armored vehicles in its 1986 aid package.

The Major Players

In our view, Qadhafi's decision on whether to resume the offensive in Chad will be greatly influenced by domestic and regional pressures, his assessment of the probable French response, and Habre's military vulnerability. French willingness to respond is likely to rest on domestic political and economic considerations, regional security issues, its assessment of Libyan involvement in any attack, and Habre's ability to defend himself. Habre's options are limited by his inability to defend himself against Libyan aggression without external support, and his actions will be largely determined by the moves of the other two players.

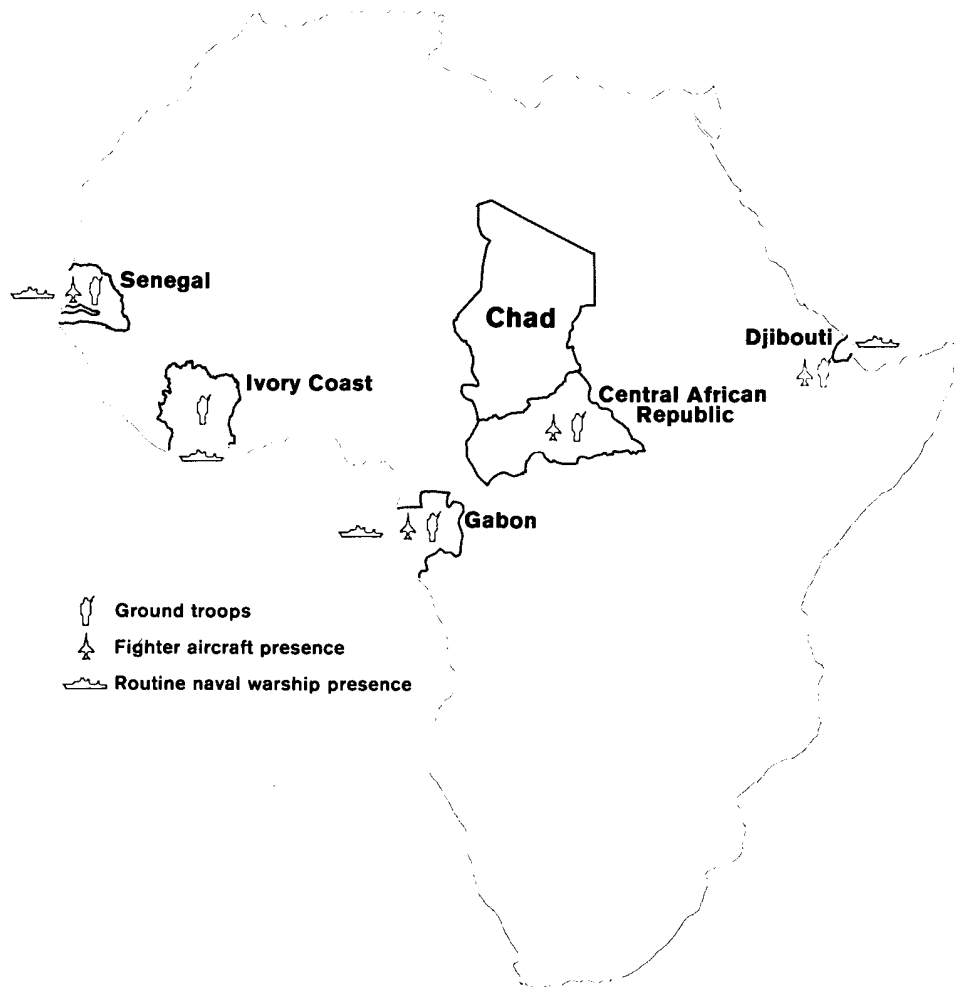
Libyan Intentions

We believe Qadhafi remains determined to replace Habre with a more compliant head of state. Qadhafi's ambitions in Chad are conditioned by his determination to break what he regards as Libya's "encirclement" by pro-US regimes. His success in Sudan over the past several months has encouraged him to move against Habre, Heightened discontent inside Libya probably has also raised Qadhafi's concern that the United States, France, or Algeria may try to use Chad as a base for subversion against him. In addition, Qadhafi almost certainly regards a pro-Libyan government in N'Djamena as key to destabilizing Chad's neighboring moderate

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Figure 2
French Combat Forces in Africa



Location	Troops	Air and Naval Components
Djibouti	3,800	Squadron of Mirage IIIC all-weather fighter aircraft, light-cargo aircraft and helicopters, naval port facility
Central African Republic	1,300	8 Jaguar fighter-bombers and 2 KC-135 tankers, light-cargo aircraft, heavy-lift helicopters
Senegal	500	Light-cargo aircraft and helicopters, naval port facility, 1 maritime patrol aircraft
Gabon	400	4 Jaguar fighter-bombers and 1 KC-135 tanker, 1 light transport, 1 helicopter, 1 maritime patrol aircraft
Ivory Coast	470	1 light helicopter

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governments—Nigeria, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Niger—most of which have large Muslim populations. [redacted]

Despite the continued buildup of Libyan and rebel forces in northern Chad, Qadhafi's preoccupation with the current crisis with Washington might delay Libyan military action any time soon. In our view, the Libyans are likely to become more aggressive in Chad only when Qadhafi is able personally to direct the decisionmaking process. Competing demands on him for decisions involving Libyan support for terrorism and subversion in other regions, political opportunities in other African states, or threats from foreign and domestic enemies might distract him for a lengthy period as they have in the past. [redacted]

[redacted] In our view, Qadhafi also realizes that Libyan military actions in Chad at this time present a number of risks, including perhaps forcing Europeans to join the United States in taking economic action against Libya. Moreover, even a limited defeat probably would affect his already eroding domestic position and undermine his claims to Third World revolutionary leadership—one of his most cherished objectives. [redacted]

Once Qadhafi is able to focus again on Chad, we believe his assessment of probable French and US reactions will determine the level, pace, and timing of Libyan actions. For example, we believe Qadhafi would speed up his timetable for military action if he believed that Mitterrand's preoccupation with French legislative elections in March would minimize the chances of a French military response. Mitterrand's remarks to the French press in December affirming his government's reluctance to assume the role of "gendarme" of Africa and emphasizing that Paris

does not have a formal defense agreement with N'Djamena might encourage Qadhafi's aggressiveness. The Libyan leader also might consider moving sooner if he becomes convinced that French political conservatives—perhaps more inclined to challenge Libya—were improving their prospects for taking over the foreign policy portfolio after the elections. [redacted]

We believe Qadhafi also will continue to review his diplomatic options. The strengthening of Libyan military forces in northern Chad has already been accompanied by political posturing. For example, Qadhafi's visits to Senegal and Mali in late 1985 were accompanied by [redacted] hints that he was receptive to a negotiated settlement with Habre, [redacted]

[redacted] In our view, even if Qadhafi decides to resume military actions, he will periodically try to exploit through diplomacy any reluctance by Mitterrand to confront Libya militarily in Chad. We believe Qadhafi probably hopes the French can be persuaded to reduce their support for Habre in exchange for an agreement by Tripoli to forego additional military action. We presume that Qadhafi believes backtracking by Paris on its support would seriously undercut Habre's authority and international prestige, and possibly prompt coup plotting in N'Djamena. [redacted]

In the event of a French attack on Libyan and rebel positions, we believe Qadhafi will focus his diplomacy on obtaining international condemnation of Paris and regional acquiescence in a "peacekeeping force" comprising mainly Libyans. Such maneuvering would be intended to legitimize the continued presence of Libyan forces in Chad, while making it difficult for Paris to justify additional attacks. We believe he might also retaliate by targeting French personnel and facilities for terrorist attacks. [redacted]

French Calculations

Although France has few direct economic interests in Chad, Paris views a stable pro-Western Chad as a buffer against Libyan expansion into areas of greater strategic and economic importance, according to a variety of published French statements. We believe

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Chad also is important to Paris because other moderate francophone states see French policies there as a barometer of French willingness to defend its African allies.⁵ French domestic economic problems, however, have made it increasingly difficult for Paris to back up its political goals with military might, and we expect economic considerations—both the cost of a military engagement and the potential loss in trade with Libya—to play a key role in any future French decision to intervene militarily in Chad. []

Reporting from the US Embassy in Paris indicates that French policy in Chad is guided by two underlying objectives—to deny Qadhafi control of N'Djamena and to avoid a protracted conflict that would entail high human and economic costs. Consequently, barring a major Libyan invasion, we believe that Paris will proceed cautiously on any decision to use military force in Chad. Direct Libyan support for any rebel push across the 16th parallel—particularly the visibility of that support—is likely to be the key factor in determining a French response. The French also would try to avoid being branded neocolonialists by enlisting at least quiet acquiescence from African countries—and perhaps a public request from N'Djamena for French intervention. []

Despite recent claims by French Foreign Ministry officials that Paris would regard the Libyans as responsible for any attack, we believe Mitterrand will make a decision based on the circumstances of the moment. If the Libyan hand were well hidden, we believe that France probably would be content to portray renewed conflict as a purely Chadian affair as it did during the fighting between government and rebel forces in northern Chad in mid-1983. If direct Libyan involvement were obvious, however, French officials have indicated that airstrikes would be ordered against Libyan positions in northern Chad. Nevertheless, in our view, Paris might calculate that behind-the-scenes diplomatic pressure combined with a token deployment of ground forces from Bangui to N'Djamena would be sufficient to deter further Libyan and rebel advances as it was in August 1983 after

Libyan and rebel forces seized Faya-Largeau. Although the US Embassy in Paris says Mitterrand would be very reluctant to send ground forces back into Chad on the scale of the 1983-84 intervention—during which 3,200 French troops were involved—we believe he would do so if there appeared no other way to halt a Libyan and rebel push southward. []

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With the approach of legislative elections in March, we believe domestic political considerations will grow increasingly important in any French decision to use military force in Chad. On the one hand, some embassy sources argue that Libyan aggression would provide Paris with the opportunity to carry out a quick, successful airstrike against Libyan positions in northern Chad, which would rally public support for Mitterrand and the Socialist Party before the March elections. We believe, on the other hand, that the risk of a backlash by Mitterrand's fellow Socialists opposed to military interventionism, as well as the risk of French casualties and the financial burden of a protracted conflict, will make Mitterrand overly cautious as the elections approach. Even if, as we expect, the conservatives recapture control of the parliament and favor a firmer response, Mitterrand—based on his public statements and US Embassy reporting—is likely to protect his prerogatives as the country's chief foreign policymaker and resist increasing France's military role in Chad. []

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Habre's Vulnerabilities

Although US Embassy reporting underscores the fact that Habre has substantially improved his own political standing and the capabilities of his Army over the last year, we believe that his rule remains vulnerable to Libyan destabilization efforts—particularly if Tripoli returns to its former strategy of exerting military pressure on two fronts.⁶ Habre faces critical budgetary shortages, a chronic Libyan-backed insurgency in the south, and serious logistic and supply problems in the north. The large drop in the world price of cotton in late 1985—Chad's only export and the largest

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source of government revenue—will constrain Habre's ability to purchase military supplies and pay soldier's salaries. []

Although successful government counterinsurgency operations in 1985 significantly improved the security situation in the south, the US Embassy reports that N'Djamena's inability—despite aid from Paris—to pay promised salaries to some 4,000 former southern rebels who recently joined the government could lead them to defect back to the rebel ranks. Moreover, Chadian officials claim that Tripoli provided funds last month to the approximately 1,500 hardcore southern insurgents for recruiting new members. []

[] We believe a rise in southern rebel activity would force Habre to again direct to the south elite Presidential Guard units that could otherwise be used to reinforce northern positions. []

We believe chronic morale, equipment, and logistic problems would severely hamper Habre's ability to repel sustained Libyan-backed rebel actions in the north. Many government units in the north continue to suffer from disease and shortages of food, water, and equipment. []

[] The loyalty of soldiers from southern Chad, who comprise about half of the 5,500 troops in the north, is questionable since [] indicates many are untrained former rebels not fully integrated into the Army. We also believe that N'Djamena's lack of funds and reliable air transport will make it difficult to resupply northern troops, who are ill equipped to combat armor, air attacks, or heavy artillery. According to the [] [] has large reserves of equipment at his presidential compound in N'Djamena, but he remains unwilling to move much of it to the north for fear the harsh climate and poor maintenance would quickly render the equipment inoperable. In the event of sustained Libyan or rebel attacks, this essential equipment will be in N'Djamena with no means to move it quickly to the north. []

Habre also remains vulnerable to a Libyan-sponsored terrorist attack, in our view. According to the US Embassy, although there has been no recent reports of terrorist plots, Chadian security officials remain concerned that Qadhafi may try to assassinate Habre. In late 1984, a sophisticated, radio-controlled bomb was taken from a Chadian merchant living in N'Djamena, who claimed he had been given the device by a Libyan residing in Cameroon. []

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Scenarios for Escalation

In our view, the possibilities for escalation of the conflict in Chad over the next year fall into three general scenarios:

- Increased small-scale clashes between government and rebel patrols, but no large-scale operations south of the 16th parallel—essentially a playing out of the current situation.
- More sustained attacks against Habre's northern positions by mixed groups of Chadian and rebel forces.
- A large-scale Libyan and rebel invasion aimed at capturing N'Djamena. []

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Sporadic Small-Scale Clashes

This scenario—perhaps one chance in three—assumes that Qadhafi remains preoccupied with other issues and does not choose to raise the stakes in Chad, thus avoiding an escalation that risks a French response. Sporadic small-scale clashes between rebel and government forces—similar to the brief shootout last December near Koro Toro—would be likely as the rebels moved to more forward positions and began operations designed to sap Habre's strength and test their own capabilities. In the absence of a large-scale push south of the 16th parallel, Libya might supplement such ad hoc activity with more ambitious penetrations of government territory similar to the rebel raid on the government outpost at Zigey in January

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1984. We also would expect Tripoli to continue resupplying and encouraging southern dissidents to mount operations against Habre's thinly stretched troops. Meanwhile, Tripoli probably would continue to upgrade rebel forces and its own military capabilities in northern Chad, while also searching for diplomatic opportunities designed to weaken Habre and advance its own interests in Chad. In our view, Habre's military position under this scenario would remain about the same, but his plans for economic and political development would continue to be delayed as scarce resources are directed toward the military. []

French policy under this scenario would remain unchanged, in our view. Paris would be likely to view Qadhafi's continued restraint as confirmation that its recent military moves—for example, the stationing of additional aircraft at Bangui—had served to deter Qadhafi from initiating attacks across the 16th parallel. Consequently, France probably would maintain its current state of readiness in Africa, while continuing to provide limited military and budgetary support to N'Djamena. Although Qadhafi under this scenario might carry out provocative acts such as sending patrols south of the 16th parallel or stationing jet fighters at Ouadi Doum, we do not believe France would move preemptively against Libyan positions in northern Chad in the absence of a clearly documented Libyan push across the 16th parallel. []

Libyan-Supported Rebel Attacks

We believe the chances are slightly better than even that Qadhafi will focus his attention on Chad in the next year, initiating a push across the 16th parallel by Chadian rebels and providing limited Libyan support. Under this scenario, Qadhafi's willingness to test both French resolve and Habre's military capabilities would reflect his confidence that Paris would react cautiously and provide him with an opportunity to weaken Habre and gain additional Chadian territory. Rebel and Libyan units are already positioned to carry out such attacks and they could occur with no warning. We believe a rebel attack probably would include light armor units manned by newly trained rebels. We expect Libyan participation in the attacks to be limited, however, and hard to detect—for

example, advisers, communications support, and elements of light armor units—thereby allowing Qadhafi to claim that the fighting is solely between two Chadian factions. []

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In our judgment, because many of Habre's troops—particularly his elite Presidential Guard—are fierce fighters and better equipped than they have ever been in the past, they probably could repel the initial rebel attack. Government forces, however, lack the ammunition, firepower, and resupply capabilities to oppose a determined rebel offensive that employs limited Libyan armor and heavy artillery support, and would probably lose ground over several weeks. Moreover, the [] that the loyalty and willingness to fight of many government troops in the north is questionable. Given this, we believe a successful rebel attack against one of Habre's outposts could lead to a large number of desertions. []

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[] we also would expect an increase in rebel activity in the south to accompany a Libyan-supported push across the 16th parallel in order to tie down government troops who could otherwise be used to reinforce northern positions. []

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While the French appear capable of executing a quick and effective airstrike that could force Qadhafi to reevaluate his military plans, we believe—based on US Embassy reporting and the delayed French response to Libyan air attacks on Habre's forces in August 1983—that Paris would put off any military response until they had assessed the extent of Libyan involvement and the performance of Habre's troops. Moreover, Paris probably would be apprehensive about the domestic reaction if a French plane were shot down as happened during the rebel attack on Ziguéy in January 1984. Consequently, despite what we expect would be substantial pressure from N'Djamena, French military commanders in the field, and some moderate African states, we believe the Mitterrand government would delay until undeniable proof of a direct Libyan role was established or Habre's position became clearly precarious. Although the French are unlikely to agree to any political compromise with Tripoli that requires the removal of Habre,

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Qadhafi's past political maneuvering on Chad suggests that he is likely to try to exploit French reluctance to move militarily by proposing diplomatic options at each stage of any conflict. []

We believe that French equivocation in the face of the initial rebel attacks probably would in a short period of time embolden Qadhafi to reinforce the rebels with additional Libyan armor and heavy artillery support. Under these conditions, the fighting could escalate with Libya turning to airstrikes possibly with SF-260 light-strike aircraft manned by newly trained rebel pilots. Based on a review of forces and equipment, we believe Habre on his own could defend his major northern garrisons against such an attack for only about a week because of his limited antiarmor capabilities, lack of air defense, and logistic problems that would hamper resupply efforts. In August 1983, these vulnerabilities forced Habre to withdraw from his key garrison at Faya-Largeau after about a week of sporadic Libyan air attacks with SU-22 ground attack aircraft and Mirage F-1 fighter bombers. If Habre were forced to retreat, he probably would move his troops south to Mousourro and Abeche—his next most defensible positions. []

If the level of fighting began to intensify and Libyan involvement was clearly established, we believe the French probably would respond militarily with a combination of airstrikes against Libyan airbases in northern Chad and rebel forward positions and a token deployment of ground forces. If Habre's position became precarious and he was forced to retreat from his major northern garrisons at Kalait and Kouba Olanga, we believe a French military response would become even more likely. In our view, French intervention almost certainly would halt the advance of Libyan-supported rebel forces, and perhaps allow Habre to launch a limited counterattack using equipment stockpiled in N'Djamena and emergency military deliveries from its foreign backers. If he was unable to regain lost territory, however, another military stalemate probably would evolve with the demarcation line south of the 16th parallel. Meanwhile, Libyan casualties as a result of French airstrikes might provoke Qadhafi to begin targeting French personnel and facilities for terrorist attacks, thereby raising the costs to Paris of further military action in Chad. []

In the event, however, that the French did not intervene—perhaps a 1-in-5 chance—we believe that Habre probably would be forced to retreat to Mousorrou and Abeche. There he probably would make a stand, resulting in a protracted conflict with heavy losses. In our view, Habre's chances of halting the rebel advance at this point, although still poor, would improve because he would be closer to his main supply base at N'Djamena while the rebels would be further from their logistic bases at Fada and Faya Largeau. Although less likely, we also see the possibility that a large number of Habre's southern troops might panic and disperse, leaving Habre with only his loyal northern tribesmen to defend N'Djamena. Under such a scenario, we believe Habre might return to his former stronghold in the Biltine region bordering Sudan, regroup, and begin guerrilla operations again. []

Combined Libyan-Rebel Drive for N'Djamena

This scenario—the least likely—envisions a large-scale Libyan and rebel force pushing across the 16th parallel in a military operation designed to quickly seize large amounts of territory in an advance on the capital. Qadhafi's perception of French resolve is critical to this decision. Before initiating this course of action, we believe Qadhafi would have to be confident that the French response would be delayed, and possibly limited, thereby allowing Libyan forces, at a minimum, to gain additional territory. He called the French bluff on the withdrawal agreement in 1984, and we believe that he is confident he can outwit the French again. If Qadhafi became convinced that the French were unwilling to respond quickly and effectively, we believe he might launch a lightning attack and try to present Paris with a *fait accompli*. The most likely evolution of this scenario, in our view, however, would be an escalation of the preceding one, as Qadhafi—emboldened by the lack of French response or one that is overly cautious—decided to send in Libyan troops under the guise of a "peacekeeping force."⁷ []

On the basis of a review of past combat performance, we estimate that once Qadhafi had his forces in place it would take Libya a minimum of about two weeks to

⁷ We see a greater chance of this scenario occurring if it comes about as an escalation of the preceding scenario. []

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move into N'Djamena, if unopposed by the French. In such an all-out drive, Tripoli would make little effort to hide its involvement and would utilize SU-22 bombers and tanks in support of its operations. Given the opposition of Habre's forces, the difficult terrain of northern and central Chad, and the possibility of a French response, however, we believe Qadhafi does not currently have sufficient forces in northern Chad to carry out such an invasion. Before making a large-scale move, the Libyans probably would need additional heavy-lift transporters, more troops to bring units in Chad to full strength, and fighter aircraft.

Despite Qadhafi's perceptions, a Libyan invasion likely would provoke a French military reaction sufficient to halt the advance of Libyan and rebel troops. On the basis of statements by French officials, we believe that Paris would first use airstrikes and a token deployment of troops to N'Djamena, but if this did not stop the Libyan push they would quickly insert additional ground forces. Paris, however, would be unlikely to commit enough men and materiel to drive Qadhafi back to the 16th parallel or out of Chad entirely due to the high human and economic costs of such an engagement. Because of this, another military stalemate probably would evolve with the demarcation line south of the 16th parallel—possibly as low as the 14th parallel.

If a pro-Libyan regime were installed in N'Djamena, we doubt that it would be able to unify or control all of Chad's traditionally fractious population. We believe Habre—if not killed—would try to retreat to his old stronghold in the Biltine region bordering Sudan. There he would regroup, and once again begin guerrilla operations, as he did in 1980 following his defeat by Libyan forces.

Implications for the United States

In our judgment, the Habre regime remains critically dependent on continued Western military and political backing to ensure its survival if confronted with

Libyan aggression. Although Paris remains N'Djamena's principal backer, diplomatic reporting suggests that Habre and other African leaders are increasingly looking to Washington to bear a greater share of the burden in Chad. This tendency is likely to intensify over time as domestic economic constraints force the French to play a diminished role in support of their former African colonies. If France appeared hesitant to support Habre, we believe moderate African states in the region—such as Niger, Egypt, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Zaire—would urge the United States to provide him with emergency military aid and to exert political pressure on France to intervene on his behalf as they did in 1983 following the Libyan bombing of Faya-Largeau. If Paris chose not to intervene militarily in support of Habre, we believe substantial pressure would be brought to bear on the United States as the only Western nation capable of standing up to Qadhafi. Recent diplomatic reporting suggests that some moderate African states probably would see Libyan aggression against Habre as an opportunity for the United States to retaliate against Qadhafi's support for international terrorism. If Washington fails to respond in a way the Africans see as satisfactory, they may feel compelled to reach an accommodation with Qadhafi, especially if the Libyan leader sweetens a rapprochement with offers of economic assistance.

Qadhafi will also be watching for indications of US willingness to step in for the French in Chad. A US refusal to intervene to prevent Habre's defeat, in our judgment, would encourage Qadhafi's aggressiveness by convincing him that Washington was unwilling to directly counter Libyan expansionism. A more aggressive reaction from Washington probably would prompt Qadhafi to slow down his timetable for subversion in Chad. Qadhafi would not abandon his attempts to install a pro-Libyan government in N'Djamena, however, anticipating that Washington, like Paris, would decide at some point that the price of supporting Habre is unacceptably high.

is likely to ask for US help in resupplying and equipping Habre's

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**US and French Aid to Chad,
1983-86***Million US \$*

	1983	1984	1985	1986 ^a
United States				
Economic	17	17	64 ^b	20
Military	27 ^c	2	5	5
Military personnel	5	5	11	11
France				
Economic	30	32	31	31
Military	50	55 ^d	10	7
Military personnel	3,000 ^e	3,200	200	200

^a Estimated.^b Dramatic jump is caused by the \$48 million in food aid sent to Chad in 1985 to help alleviate famine caused by drought.^c Includes \$25 million in emergency military aid to help Habre repel a Libyan and Chadian rebel offensive.^d Includes \$50 million spent in operating expenses to maintain French troops in Chad.^e France sent in troops to help support Habre against a Libyan and Chadian rebel offensive.

Chad that resisted Libyan subversion. Tripoli, in turn, would be emboldened to increase efforts to undermine other states in the region. Unsure of the West's willingness to intervene on their behalf, moderate regimes such as Cameroon, Niger, and the Central African Republic probably would be increasingly reluctant to adopt positions in international forums that might provoke Qadhafi to increase subversion against their regimes.

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forces,
support if Paris decides to respond with airstrikes against Libyan bases. A French decision to send troops rapidly to N'Djamena might lead Paris to ask for US assistance in airlifting large vehicles and troops. Despite the similarity of US and French interests in Chad, however, we also see the potential for friction if Paris came to regard any pressure from Washington for a French military response as interference in their internal affairs. Moreover, a substantial US military aid package, in our view, almost certainly would heighten French suspicions that the United States intends to undermine French influence in Africa.

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If Habre were to be defeated by Libyan-backed forces—a possible outcome if Qadhafi opted for a sustained or large-scale attack—we believe that neighboring Africans would be quick to blame Washington and Paris for failing to ensure a moderate-led

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